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UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ROSA L. DeLAURO

3RD DISTRICT, CONNECTICUT

August 10, 2017

CO-CHAIR, DEMOCRATIC STEERING AND  
POLICY COMMITTEE

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EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT,  
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION,  
AND RELATED AGENCIES

The Honorable Alexander Acosta  
Secretary of Labor  
United States Department of Labor  
200 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Acosta,

At a time when the economic security of working Americans is so vital, we must enact policy that ensures everyone can benefit from the economic recovery, and that everyone has the training they need to get good jobs with fair wages. The advantage for workers with more than a high school diploma is clear—but we need to shift our thinking to not only focus on degrees—but also on in-demand skills and credentials to solve the biggest economic issue of our time—that too many people do not make enough to live on.

It is for these reasons I supported creation of the Apprenticeship Grant program at the Department of Labor in fiscal year 2016 and increased funding for the initiative in fiscal year 2017. While the federal government has long played a key role in helping American workers learn and grow through workforce development and connecting businesses with talent, the Apprenticeship initiative is providing new and much-needed resources to States to help integrate apprenticeship into their education and workforce systems. I know you are a supporter, as well, given your testimony during the Labor budget hearing earlier this year.

In Connecticut, more than 1,700 employers employ over 5,500 apprentices in registered apprenticeship programs and the majority of the training programs are in the construction and manufacturing industry. In fiscal year 2016, Connecticut was awarded \$1.6 million to expand apprenticeships to new sectors and reach out to new employers to expand access to apprenticeships statewide. It serves 1,672 apprentices in diverse fields such as advanced manufacturing, health care, and information technology. For example, this grant provides tuition support for students at two CT Technical Schools: Connecticut Aero Tech School at the Brainard Hartford Airport and Stratford School for Aviation Maintenance Technicians at the Sikorsky Memorial Airport. It is a critical component to help grow the unskilled labor force in my state.

As you implement the fiscal year 2017 Department of Labor budget, I strongly urge you to make continuation awards for the 2016 Apprenticeship State grantees. As you know, the Solicitation for Grant Applications (FOA-ETA-16-13) indicated to State applicants that two additional rounds of continuation awards could be provided to them by the Department of Labor to expand this proven workforce strategy. I also urge you to exercise the option to extend the National

Industry and National Equity Partners contracts, in order to increase diversity in apprenticeships among traditionally underrepresented populations and to provide technical assistance to employers pursuing apprenticeship training.

It is critical to focus federal dollars where there is a strong return on investment, such as the Registered Apprenticeship model—where more than 90 percent of apprentices are employed after completing their programs and earn an average starting wage above \$60,000—and not on creating a duplicative system that does not guarantee quality training opportunities and provides fewer safeguards for workers. By providing State grantees and national intermediaries with continued funding, the Apprenticeship initiative will continue to help strengthen and expand this proven model throughout our country.

Sincerely,



Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress

Cc:  
The Honorable Mick Mulvaney  
Director  
The White House Office of Management & Budget  
725 17th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20503